1	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND				
2	NORTHERN DIVISION				
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4	TINTED CENERA OF AMERICA				
5	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA				
6	v. CRIMINAL CASE NO. ELH-14-259				
7	DANIEL JONES,				
8	Defendant /				
9					
10	(Sentencing)				
11	Friday, August 8, 2014 Baltimore, Maryland				
12	Before: Honorable Ellen L. Hollander, Judge				
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15	Appearances:				
16	On Behalf of the Government:				
17	Michael C. Hanlon, Esquire				
18	On Behalf of the Defendant:				
19	Allison R. Levine, Esquire				
20					
21					
22	Reported by:				
23	Mary M. Zajac, RPR, FCRR Fourth Floor, U.S. Courthouse				
24	101 West Lombard Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201				
25					

1 (Proceedings at 3:06 p.m.) 2 MR. HANLON: Your Honor, I call United States versus 3 Daniel Jones, Criminal Case Number ELH-14-0259. This matter is set for sentencing. Michael Hanlon for the United States. 4 5 THE COURT: All right. Counsel? 6 MS. LEVINE: Good afternoon, Your Honor. For the 7 record, Allison Levine, of Roland Walker and Marc Zayon, on behalf of Mr. Daniel Jones, who is directly to my right. 8 9 THE COURT: All right. If your client is ready to 10 proceed. Of course, please have a seat. 11 Counsel, are you satisfied --12 MS. LEVINE: Your Honor, if I may, I know that -- I've been over in Judge Bennett all week. We just had a verdict. 13 14 I may have just a moment or two with my client. 15 THE COURT: Sure. I just got word that you all were 16 ready. 17 MS. LEVINE: I just need a moment or two to talk and 18 let him know what's going to go on. 19 THE COURT: Okay. Take all the time you need. I'll 2.0 take a recess. Let me know when you're ready. 21 (Recess.) 2.2 THE COURT: Have you had enough time, counsel? 23 MS. LEVINE: Yes. Thank you, Your Honor. 24 THE COURT: Okay. Can you assure me, counsel, that 25 your client is both physically and mentally able to proceed to

sentencing?

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MS. LEVINE: He is physically and mentally ready to proceed, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. And has he either personally read or have you read to him the content of the Presentence Report?

MS. LEVINE: He has personally read it, and my colleague, Jason Silverstein, visited him and they went over it together.

THE COURT: Okay. Then you may have a seat.

We are here for sentencing in connection with the defendant's plea of guilty on June 4, 2014, to Count One of an information, charging possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, in violation of 18 USC Section 922(g)(1). And that is a Class C felony. Of course I've read the Presentence Report, and that is ECF 29.

I'm also mindful that, under Paragraph 11 of the plea agreement, the plea was entered under Rule 11(c)(1)(C), calling for a total sentence of 72 months of imprisonment, with the sentence to run from November 25 of 2013.

Let me explain to Mr. Jones exactly how we'll be proceeding this afternoon.

It is the Court's responsibility, pursuant to several cases in the United States Supreme Court and the United States

Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, to undertake the calculation of what we call the advisory sentencing guidelines.

As the name suggests, these guidelines are advisory and not mandatory. Even though the parties have agreed upon a disposition, the Court must nonetheless actually make these calculations, and make them correctly. These calculations serve as what we call the starting point, or the benchmark, in arriving at a sentence that is appropriate.

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In every case, of course, the Court nonetheless must make an individualized assessment based on the person who appears for sentencing and also, of course, the circumstances of the offense. The Court never presumes the sentence is necessarily one that falls within the guidelines, even though the Court must make the calculations. As I said, each case must be analyzed individually.

With this background, though, I'm going to make the calculations. And then, counsel, if I've made any mistakes or errors, I'll invite you to tell me.

The Sentencing Commission guideline for a violation of 18 USC Section 922(g)(1) is found in Section 2K2.1(a)(2) of the guidelines. And, Mr. Jones, when we talk about the guidelines, it's a pretty thick manual. Every section I mention you can actually find in here. And a lot of things get mentioned. There are statutes. That's something separate. There are rules. That's something else. But for purposes of making sure you understand what I'm talking about for the guidelines, it's based on this pretty thick manual.

So we look to 2K2.1(a)(2), and it calls for a base offense level of 24. This is because you committed the instant offense that brings you here today subsequent to sustaining at least two felony convictions for either a crime of violence or a controlled substance offense.

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Because the firearm was stolen, the base offense level is increased by two. This is under 2K2.1(b)(4)(A) of the guidelines. And because the firearm was used in connection with another felony offense, the base offense level is increased again, this time by four levels. This is under 2K2.1(b)(6)(B).

When you add everything up before any deductions, you arrive at an offense level of 30.

There are some deductions. Two, because you have accepted responsibility for your criminal misconduct. This is under 3E1.1(a). And in anticipation of a motion by the government, as agreed upon in the plea agreement, you would get one more deduction under Section 3E1.1(b) for your timely notification of your intention to plead guilty. Does the government so move?

MR. HANLON: The government so moves, Your Honor.

THE COURT: That motion would be granted. So there's a total of three deductions, giving a final offense level of 27.

In terms of the defendant's criminal history category -- and this is something the Court must consider as part of the guideline calculation -- the defendant presents with two

prior felony offenses that qualify, it seems to me, from looking at them. And if there's any dispute, I'm going to ask counsel to let me know. He has a conviction for possession with the intent to distribute. And this was an offense for which he was found guilty in November of 1999 in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City. And he looks like he had a time-served sentence and placed on probation. He was found guilty of violating that probation and ultimately received a three-year sentence.

And then he has a conviction for first degree assault -- and I pause to note it's not second degree, it's first degree assault -- and use of a handgun in the commission of a crime of violence, and possession with intent to distribute. And these offenses, he was found guilty of them on May 7 of 2001.

And he received, looks like a sentence of 10 years suspend all but five. Is that right?

MR. HANLON: That's the government's reading, Your Honor.

MS. LEVINE: Yes.

THE COURT: Okay. So this gives the defendant a criminal history score of six points and a criminal history score -- excuse me. Yes. Six points. And that translates to a criminal history category of three. So far any issues, counsel?

MR. HANLON: No, Your Honor.

MS. LEVINE: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: In terms of the statute, the maximum term

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of imprisonment is 10 years under 18 USC Section 924(a)(2). And, under the guidelines, based on a total offense level of 27 and a criminal history category of 3, the range for imprisonment is 87 to 108 months.

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In terms of supervised release, if a term of imprisonment is imposed, by statute the Court may impose a term of supervised release of not more than three years. This is under 18 USC Section 3583(b)(2).

In terms of the guidelines, if the Court imposes a term of imprisonment of more than one year, then under 5D1.1(a), supervised release would be required. The guideline range is at least one year, but not more than three. This is under 5D1.2(a)(2) of the guidelines.

By way of 18 USC Section 3561(c)(1), the defendant would be eligible for not less than one, nor more than five, years of probation. Under the guidelines, he is not eligible for probation. This is under 5B1.1(a), Application Note 2.

By statute, the maximum fine is \$250,000. This is under 18 USC Section 3571(b)(3). Under the guidelines, 5E1.2(c)(3), the fine range is from \$12,500 to \$125,000. There is a mandatory special assessment of \$100 required by law.

Under Paragraphs 12 and 13 of the plea agreement, as part of it, the defendant agreed to the entry of an order of forfeiture. I have been presented with a consent order of forfeiture. And it pertains to a Taurus Model PTAF 9 millimeter

1 pistol; \$10,751 in US currency that was seized on November 25, 2 2013; and \$760 in US currency seized on November 25 of 2013, all 3 more particularly described in the consent order of forfeiture. It doesn't have the defendant's name on it but --4 MR. HANLON: Did I make a -- oh, I'm sorry. 5 6 signature line, Your Honor? 7 THE COURT: It just has your --8 MR. HANLON: That's correct, Your Honor. Since it's a 9 consent and since it's already contemplated in the plea 10 agreement, I just signed it myself. I did not ask the defense to 11 sign it. I don't think the defense has an objection. 12 MS. LEVINE: I have no objection. I've gone over the 13 document with my client. 14 THE COURT: Okay. Does he have any objection? 15 MS. LEVINE: No. I've gone over everything with him. 16 THE COURT: Okay. So I will be signing the consent 17 order of forfeiture as part of the plea agreement. 18 So I think I've covered everything that is required by 19 way of guideline calculations. Any objections, errors? Any 2.0 issues in dispute? 21 Not from the government, Your Honor. MR. HANLON: 2.2 MS. LEVINE: No, Your Honor. We did do a pre-plea 23 investigation. There is a report. And everything is consistent

THE COURT: Okay. So I guess my question will be,

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with that report.

starting with the government, in terms of the (C) plea of 72 months, it is below the guidelines. So I will be interested in hearing from you, Mr. Hanlon, as to why the Court should go along with the (C) plea.

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MR. HANLON: Certainly, Your Honor. We are, I believe, if my math is correct, 15 months below the guidelines in this case with this recommendation, assuming that math is correct. 87 minus 72, I think, is 15 months.

The background of this, Your Honor, I'll come to two reasons why I would ask the Court to consider that differential in this case. There is a background here that, where Ms. Levine and Mr. Silverstein and I had a pretty healthy period of time, following the defendant's initial appearance and prior to any indictment in the case, to discuss and to negotiate, to discuss his background, to discuss the circumstances of the prior convictions and the circumstances of this case. So there was a negotiation that led to all of this.

At the end of the day, in addition to just the time that I had to sort of reflect on this, there were two things that led me to believe that this is a case where the government felt comfortable recommending something that we knew would be a little bit below the guidelines.

Number one, the defendant's acceptance of responsibility in this case was extremely prompt, much more prompt than I'm accustomed to seeing in many cases. Leaving

aside the fact that he sort of accepted responsibility on the night of the offense, once he had his initial appearance in federal court, it was an extremely quick process of the defense approaching me and saying, he's ready to accept some responsibility here. And that's one the reasons why this was a plea to an information with a waiver of indictment, rather than an indictment with full pretrial litigation. That was certainly meaningful.

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It preserved a lot of government resources and demonstrated, I think, a willingness on the part of this defendant to take responsibility and move forward. That is meaningful to me. And it often does cause me, in a pre-indictment context, to be comfortable with a certain 3553(a) recommendation that maybe I won't be comfortable with later on.

The other thing, Your Honor, is with respect to the defendant's criminal history -- and it is a significant criminal history, Your Honor, I'm certainly not going to suggest otherwise -- but I did take note of the fact that the defendant is a base offense level 24, which means that both his base offense level and his criminal history category are both being driven substantially by convictions that are both more than a decade old at the time of the incident. I'm not going to suggest that that's massive mitigation, Your Honor. These are significant convictions, particularly the first degree assault. But they did cause me to believe that maybe something below

guidelines, particularly in a pre-indictment context, was something that I would feel comfortable with, that I felt could be justified under 18 USC Section 3553(a).

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At the end of the day, Your Honor, the 3553(a) factors I think are most important are the nature and circumstances of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, the need to protect the community, and the need to deter the defendant.

Clearly, those are factors that call for a substantial period of imprisonment. The parties are recommending a substantial period of imprisonment of six years.

In the unique context of this case, the super-acceptance of responsibility and the criminal history, which is very serious, I think needs to be put in context, I do believe that a modestly below-guidelines sentence is supportable in this case, and the government recommends 72 months.

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Hanlon. Ms. Levine?

MS. LEVINE: Thank you, Your Honor. If I may, I have

known Mr. Jones for a while. I have been involved in this case

since the day that he was arrested. That next day I was at his

bail review when it still in state court on November 25th.

Once it came over to the federal government, I was speaking with Mr. Hanlon. We had been in constant communication. Right away, my client expressed an interest in accepting responsibility and moving forward so that we could expedite the process and that he wouldn't be wasting the government's

resources. He has accepted responsibility.

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If I may talk briefly about his criminal history. We did go forward with a pre-plea investigation. The report is in front of me. I will concede that there is a significant criminal history. But, again, there is nothing that has occurred within the past 10 years. And I believe that's because he was around 18, 19 years old when those prior events did occur.

Since that time, he has found himself, he has young children, he has taken care of them, he wants to be a provider for them. He doesn't want to grow up and have his children look at him the way that he remembers his household without his father. So he understands that there is a significant period of incarceration that is being recommended pursuant to the plea, which is the 72 months, and with the recommendation that it date back to November 25th, which was the date of the arrest.

However, he is extremely interested in serving time, getting out, and being able to provide for his family, be home with his young children. He would take his children to school every day. He was very involved since day one. It's always been about his children. How are they doing? How are they doing in school?

So I would just submit to Your Honor that my client is accepting responsibility, he has gone along with all the recommendations, including the consent forfeiture, and ask that Your Honor accept the plea of 72 months.

(It is the policy of this court that every guilty plea and sentencing proceeding include a bench conference concerning whether the defendant is or is not cooperating.)

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THE COURT: Okay. Let me explain to Mr. Jones that he has, sir, the absolute right to address the Court in your own behalf if you would like to. You're not required to. If you chose not to, I would never hold it against you. It is, of course, entirely up to you. But if wish to say anything, this would be the time.

THE DEFENDANT: Yeah. Yeah. I'd like to say a couple things, if you don't mind. I apologize for, you know what I'm saying, for coming through these processes or coming through these doors again. When I committed them crimes, I was younger. I was like 18, 19 years old. I really apologize. Like I say, I didn't really want to waste the state's time or their effort trying to go to trial, knowing that I was wrong in this case. You know what I mean? I'm just trying to get back out there as fast as I can to my kids and accept responsibility, move on with my life, and try not to ever get myself caught up in these situations again. You know what I mean?

I'm older now. I was really trying. You know what I mean? I took my daughter to school every day. I picked my son up from day care. I was like the main provider in their life. I lost my job. My uncle passed. You know what I mean? I kind of cut down the wrong road. You know what I mean? And I apologize.

I apologize to you and my family by even having them, you know what I mean, keep going through this with me. You know what I mean? That's it.

I apologize. You know what I mean?

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THE COURT: Well, thank you, sir. That's much appreciated. And I do have a couple remarks. I will go along with the (C) plea, but I have to say, it must have been your lucky day that you had Mr. Hanlon as the prosecutor in this case because it's a rare day that I see the government recommend a sentence below, substantially below, in my view, 15 months, the bottom of the guidelines. That doesn't happen every day.

I do commend the prosecutor. I think he was quite reasonable, and he gave his reasons. I think they're sound. It easily could go a different direction, though. And I do feel compelled to say a few things to you, Mr. Jones.

For one, I would hope that perhaps I can inspire you to turn yourself around. And for another, there are some very serious aspects to this case, and I feel I would be remiss if I didn't let you know what I was thinking.

First of all, guns are a huge problem in our community. The violence has to stop. And it has to stop. People blame the courts because here's the person standing before the Court, had a loaded weapon. For what possible reason could you have had that gun except to use it? And enough is enough.

And there's certainly every reason to say that the

Court should dole out a sentence that's harsh, to take account for the fact that this is a serious offense. And when I couple that with your prior record -- yes, your record is old to some extent, and you were young. You're not young any more. You're not old. You have a long life ahead of you, I hope. But you're getting to the point about being old enough to know better. And you were only released on the second of the two serious offenses in 2008. So you did serve some time on that one. So I would have hoped that would have been enough to tell you that it's time to turn yourself around. It upsets me that that message didn't get to you.

And the nature of that offense exactly proves my point about guns. People have them, they use them. That case involved an actual shooting. And thankfully, the person wasn't killed. But it's obviously a serious offense.

Now, the police advised that Nathaniel shot him. I take it you're not Nathaniel, are you?

THE DEFENDANT: Nuh-uh.

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THE COURT: I don't know who the Nathaniel was. But I gather that you were there. Is that what this was about?

THE DEFENDANT: Yeah. That's kind of sort of. That's why the judge brung me back in court and resentenced me, and I went home like a couple months after that.

THE COURT: Okay. It says you were mandatorily released on August 4 of '08.

THE DEFENDANT: Yeah.

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THE COURT: So it was a shooting. I gather you didn't pull the trigger. And I'm certainly happy to hear that.

Apparently, several men were there. I don't know any more details than what it says in Paragraphs 30 and 31 of the Presentence Report, and that's where I was getting my information from.

But let me say this, Mr. Jones. You did remark about your efforts to be a good father to your children. And I hope that that will carry you forward. You can't be a good father to your children if you're locked up --

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

THE COURT: -- and committing crimes. They deserve you to be in their life. And they need you. And they need you to be a good role model to them.

So I'm hopeful that you'll take advantage of what frankly I think could be argued as a lenient sentence today.

Even though it's one the government recommends, I have to sign off on it, so to speak, and I am. It is one that I have to justify.

I want to make a few comments to you because Congress tells the judges there are a number of things the judges are supposed to consider in imposing a sentence. One is for the need for the sentence to reflect the seriousness of the offense and to provide just punishment for the offense. And the sentence could

be harsher, but I do agree that a sentence of 72 months accomplishes that objective. It's not an insignificant sentence, particularly in the federal system where there is no parole.

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Another is to deter others from such criminal conduct.

And if only this would work. I'd like to believe that it does work. It doesn't work well enough because we need to send a message loud and clear that we're not going to tolerate the use of guns in our communities.

Another is to protect the public from further crimes of the defendant. I would like to believe you. I would like to trust you, that you have said this is it, you're going to be a law-abiding member of the community from this point going forward. But only you know the answer to this.

And then, finally, to rehabilitate the defendant in the most effective manner. And I suppose we could spend a long time discussing that one and never reach a resolution as to what would be the most effective manner. But, of course, the Court can never extend the sentence for the sake of rehabilitation. And I certainly wouldn't do that here.

So all in all, when I weigh the pros and cons, I'm willing to adopt the (C) plea. And with this, sir, under 3553(a), I'm satisfied it is an appropriate sentence. And therefore, I hereby sentence you, sir, pursuant to the (C) plea, to a term of imprisonment of 72 months in the Bureau of Prisons, with the sentence to run from November 25, 2013, and upon your

release place you on a period of supervised release for three years.

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And I will impose the mandatory and standard conditions of supervised release adopted by the Court and the Probation Office, and the following special conditions: That you satisfactorily participate in a treatment program approved by the Probation Office relating to substance abuse and/or alcohol abuse, which may include evaluation, counseling, and testing as deemed necessary; that you satisfactorily participate in a vocational or educational program; and that you pay a mandatory special assessment of \$100, as required by law.

For the reasons stated in the Presentence Report, it does not appear to me that you have the ability to pay a fine.

And, therefore, under 5E1.2(e), I will waive imposition of a fine. I have, of course, already signed the order of forfeiture.

I know, because this was an information, there are no other open counts.

Is there any legal objection to the sentence?

MR. HANLON: Not from the government, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Any requests from the defense?

MS. LEVINE: I do have just a few requests, Your Honor, if I may. I would ask that Your Honor make a recommendation -- we're not sure as to his eligibility for camp status -- but if he is eligible, that he be recommended to be placed in a camp either at Cumberland or Fort Dix. If not, if he's medium

classification, he would like to go to Fort Dix in New Jersey.

He would like to stay as close to home as possible. He does have young children.

THE COURT: I will certainly make those recommendations.

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MS. LEVINE: Thank you. And if I may, just one more request, Your Honor. Pursuant to supervised release conditions, there is the substance and alcohol abuse program. If Your Honor is inclined to make a recommendation that he be eligible for the programs that are offered at either institution, any drug or alcohol program that he may get into. I believe it's the RDAP program. If Your Honor wouldn't mind recommending that program, so that way he's ready and able to get into these programs when he is released.

THE COURT: I certainly recommend the RDAP program. Do you have any legal objection to any aspect of the sentence?

MS. LEVINE: I have no legal objection, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. So really, Mr. Jones, I think it's up to you now. I really do want to encourage you in every way that I can. And I want to make a comment about supervised release, because you have some experience with the state system, and so do I.

I think it works a little bit differently here. The resources are better and we have a terrific group of people. I'd like you to understand that supervised release is not meant to

impede your life or make life difficult for you. It's actually meant to help you help yourself. And if you try to have that attitude about it, it might go a long way. But it's a terrific group of people. They really try to work with people who've been incarcerated to help you get situated and get yourself going in a positive way.

Did you want to ask me something?

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THE DEFENDANT: Yeah. My main concern is when I get out of here, I just want to have the type of resources so I can get back in the community because, like I said, like how you read the part when they said Nathaniel, you know what I mean, like I was there, but because I wouldn't say who, I guess because I wouldn't snitch on my, whoever, whoever really committed the crime, I was placed in jail. And then I felt like when I came home after doing the eight years, it really wasn't, it really wasn't nothing for me to be offered. You know what I mean?

THE COURT: Well, it's not going to be easy. I mean, it never is easy for someone, unfortunately, who has a record and has served time. But I think that they will do their best to work with you, and then you just need to do your part. So if you take advantage of whatever resources are provided for you, hopefully it will help you get on your way. And that's really all I can say about it. It's not going to be easy, as I said. It couldn't be.

People do end up leading very productive lives after

having committed crimes. So it's not, no reason, as far as I can tell, anything about you, that you couldn't be one of those people.

THE DEFENDANT: Thank you.

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THE COURT: Sir, let me advise you that in Paragraph 14 of your plea agreement, you waived many of your rights to appeal.

And I just want to doublecheck it, see exactly what it says.

You reserved the right to appeal if the Court imposed a sentence that exceeded 72 months. Obviously, that didn't happen. Nonetheless, if you believe you have any grounds to appeal and you wish to exercise them, you must note an appeal within 14 days from the entry of the Judgment and Commitment Order.

And I would ask defense counsel to confirm contact with the defendant during this period in the event he wishes to note an appeal.

MS. LEVINE: Okay. You will call me next week and we will talk and discuss whether you want to file within that 14 days. Do you understand?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

MS. LEVINE: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Anything else?

MS. LEVINE: Is there anything else that you would like to say to Her Honor, anything you would like to say on your behalf, or any other recommendations that you'd ask me to make on your behalf that I did not?

1 THE DEFENDANT: No. The fact that, about the cell 2 phone. 3 MS. LEVINE: He has asked that, there are three things that are listed on the consent forfeiture. His phones were also 4 5 seized. 6 THE COURT: The what? I'm sorry? 7 MS. LEVINE: His cell phones. He would like to see if 8 he could get those back. If not, he does understand, however, 9 there are pictures of his children on the phone and he would like 10 to see if they could be downloaded and provided to, I guess, me 11 or my office, and then I can provide them to him. 12 MR. HANLON: Your Honor, I'll invite Ms. Levine to 13 contact me. I'll put her in touch with the appropriate resources 14 of the Baltimore City Police Department to see if any of that property could be returned to the defendant. 15 16 THE COURT: Okay. They'll work on it. Nobody can 17 promise. But hopefully, they will be able to either get you the 18 photos or get you the phone. 19 Good luck to you, sir. 2.0 (Conclusion of Proceedings at 3:42 p.m.) 21 22 23 24

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE I, Mary M. Zajac, do hereby certify that I recorded stenographically the proceedings in the matter of USA v. Daniel Jones, Case Number(s) ELH-14-259, on August 8, 2014. I further certify t hat the foregoing pages constitute the official transcript of proceedings as transcribed by me to the within matter in a complete and accurate manner. In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto affixed my signature this _____, 2014. Mary M. Zajac, Official Court Reporter

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